

LNOx Estimates Directly from LIS Data

W. Koshak¹, B. Vant-Hull², and E. W. McCaul³

¹Earth Science Office, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, AL, USA.

²Steinman Hall, City College of New York, New York, NY, USA

³Universities Space Research Association, National Space Science & Technology Center, Huntsville, AL, USA.



1. BACKGROUND

Lightning nitrogen oxides (LNOx) are important because they indirectly influence our climate by controlling the concentration of ozone (O₃) and hydroxyl radicals (OH) in the atmosphere [Huntrieser et al., 1998]. In support of the National Climate Assessment (NCA) program, satellite Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS; Christian et al. [1999]; Cecil et al. [2014]) lightning optical data is used to directly estimate LNOx production over the southern portion of the conterminous US for the 16 year period 1998-2013.

2. RETRIEVAL METHOD

LIS measures a small fraction of flash energy from kth flash:

$$\beta_k = \frac{Q_k}{E_k} = \frac{\text{LIS-detected Flash Optical Energy}}{\text{Total Energy of the Flash}}$$

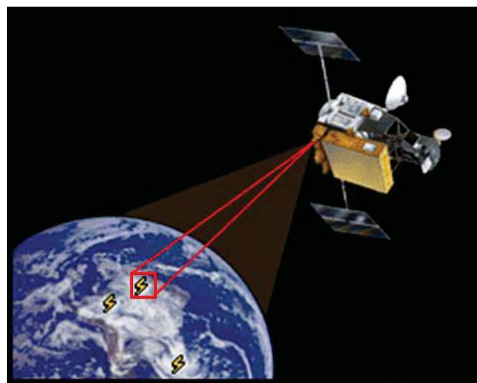
Flash LNOx Production:

$$P_k = \frac{Y}{N_A} E_k = \frac{Y}{N_A} \frac{Q_k}{\beta_k} \sim \frac{Y}{N_A} \frac{Q_k}{\beta}$$

Yield: $Y \sim 10^{17}$ molecules / J

Fraction: $\beta \sim 1.87 \times 10^{-12}$

N_A = Avogadro's constant



LIS shown detecting optical energy Q_k from the kth flash.

Total LNOx Production P_t in a Region:

(Sum over all N_o observed flashes & account for LIS detection efficiency and viewtime to extrapolate to total # flashes N_t)

$$P_t = \sum_{k=1}^{N_o} P_k + (N_t - N_o) \left(\frac{1}{N_o} \sum_{k=1}^{N_o} P_k \right)$$

Ancillary Details

$$Q_k = C A \lambda \sum_{i=1}^{n_k} \left[\frac{\sigma_{\text{LIS}} \cos \alpha_i}{r_{ik}^2} \right] \bar{E}_{\text{LIS}} = \text{LIS-detected optical energy of kth flash}$$

$$\alpha_{ik} = \sin^{-1} \left(\left[\frac{R+z}{R+H} \right] \sin \theta_{ik} \right) = \text{foreshortening angle}$$

$$r_{ik} = (R+H) \frac{\sin(\alpha_{ik} - \theta_{ik})}{\sin \theta_{ik}} = \text{range (from event footprint to LIS)}$$

R = Earth Radius, z = LIS orbital altitude, θ_{ik} = event bore-sight angle, C = conversion factor.

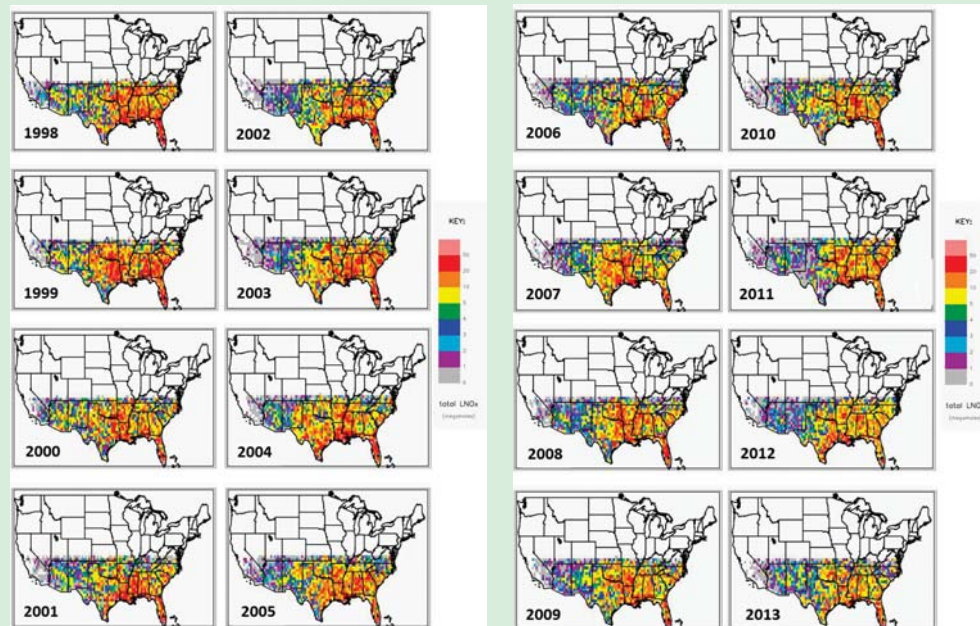
A = LIS entrance aperture area, λ = LIS band-width, \bar{E}_{LIS} = event energy density.

n_k = # frames occupied by kth flash, n_i = # pixels illuminated by kth flash.

σ_{LIS} = LIS event footprint area (in km²).

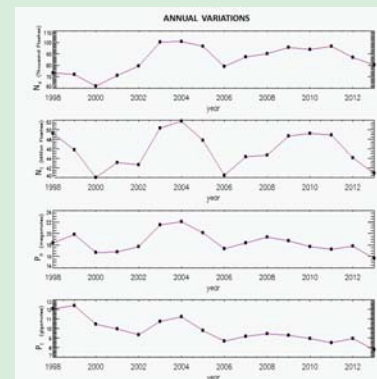
3. GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS OF LNOx

Annual geographical variations of the total LNOx production P_t described in the previous section are provided below. The value of beta has been calibrated so that the mean LNOx production per flash in 1998 (the reference year) is 250 moles.



4. TREND OF SOUTHERN CONUS LNOx

The trend in the total LNOx (summed up across the entire southern CONUS region) and associated flash counts are provided here. LIS is regarded as a very stable instrument [Buechler et al., 2014], but note that there appears to be a downward trend in the LIS-inferred total LNOx production. Additionally analyses are needed to insure that the trend is a real/natural occurrence.



Downward Trend in LNOx

5. REFERENCES

- Buechler, D. E. W. J. Koshak, H. J. Christian, and S. J. Goodman, Assessing the performance of the Lightning Imaging Sensor (LIS) using deep convective clouds, *Atmos. Res.*, 135-136, 397-403, 2014.
- Cecil, D. J., D. E. Buechler, and R. J. Blakeslee, Gridded lightning climatology from TRMM-LIS and OTD: dataset description, *Atmos. Res.*, 135-136, 404-414, 2014.
- Christian, H. J., et al., The Lightning Imaging Sensor, in *11th Conf. on Atmospheric Electricity*, pp. 746-749, ICAE, Guntersville, AL, 1999.
- Huntrieser, H., H. Schlager, C. Feigl, and H. Holler, Transport and production of NOx in electrified thunderstorms: Survey of previous studies and new observations at midlatitudes, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 103, 28247-28264, 1998.